

REMARKSAmendments

Dependent claim 8, dependent on both independent claims 1 and 2, has been indicated as allowable. Therefore, claim 8 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 1. Claims 4 to 7 have been amended to be dependent on claim 8 (rather than claim 1). New claim 15, dependent on claim 4, has been added. (Basis is in original claim 5.) New claim 16 incorporates the subject matter of claim 8 into independent claim 2. New dependent claims 17 to 20, dependent on claim 16, have basis in original claims 4 to 7. Claims 1 to 3 and 9 to 14 have been canceled. These claims have been rewritten solely to define and recite the present invention in independent form; the amendments associated with these rewritten claims are not in any way related to the Examiner's rejection based on prior art nor any applied or cited prior art. It is believed that the requested amendments can properly be made at this stage, in that they do not raise new issues, and place the claims in condition for allowance.

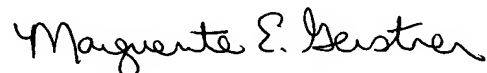
The Rejection Under 35 USC § 102(b)

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-7 and 9-14 under 35 USC § 102(b) as anticipated by Kambara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,091,406), insofar as the rejection is applicable to the amended claims. Applicants believe that this rejection is rendered moot as these claims have either been canceled or have been amended to be dependent on an allowable claim.

Conclusion

It is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance and such action at an early date is earnestly requested. If, however, there are any outstanding issues which can be usefully discussed by telephone, the Examiner is asked to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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